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SPEECH

OF

*William Cabell*  
**Mr. Rives,**

OF VIRGINIA,

ON

**THE MISSION TO PANAMA.**

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF

2570  
**The United States,**

APRIL 6, 1826.

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## Speech.



The House being in Committee of the whole, on the following resolution, reported by the Committee of Foreign Relations.

*Resolved*, That, in the opinion of the House, it is expedient to appropriate the funds necessary to enable the President of the United States to send Ministers to the Congress of Panama."

The amendment offered by Mr. M'Lane, of Delaware, being also before the Committee, in the following words :

"It being understood, as the opinion of this House, that, as it has always been the settled policy of this Government, in extending our commercial relations with foreign nations, to have with them as little political connexion as possible, to preserve peace, commerce, and friendship, with all nations, and to form entangling alliances with none : the Ministers who may be sent shall attend the said Congress in a diplomatic character merely ; and shall not be authorized to discuss, consider or consult upon any proposition of alliance, offensive or defensive, between this country and any of the Spanish American Governments, or any stipulation, compact, or declaration, binding the United States in any way or to any extent, to resist interference from abroad with the domestic concerns of the aforesaid Governments, or any measure which shall commit the present or future neutral rights or duties of these United States, either as may regard European nations, or between the several States of Mexico and South America ; leaving the United States free to adopt, in any event which may happen, affecting the relations of the Spanish American Governments, with each other, or with foreign nations, such measures as the friendly disposition, cherished by the American People, towards the People of those States, and the honour and interest of this nation may dictate."

And Mr. RIVES, of Virginia, having moved to amend the amendment of Mr. M'Lane, by inserting the following, after the words "aforesaid governments," where those words occur, in the 12th 13th lines :

"Or any compact or engagement by which the United States shall be *pledged* to the Spanish American States, to maintain, by force, the principle, that no part of the American continent is henceforward subject to colonization by any European power"—

Mr. RIVES, of Virginia, rose, and said, he was admonished, by every consideration of a personal nature, to abstain from any participation in the present discussion. No one could be more sensible than himself how little ability he possessed, at any time, to assist the deliberations of this House, and that ability, small as it was at all times, was now materially lessened by the effects of long continued infirmity. Nevertheless, he was urged, by an impulse which he

could not resist, to say something upon the present occasion. The *motives* of public men, for the part they shall act in reference to this subject, have been and will be drawn into question. While, on the one hand, servility and subservience may be attributed to those who shall support the measure, (he was not aware that such an imputation had been made, and he was, certainly, very far from making it himself,) on the other hand, we *know* that those who cannot bring their minds to approve it, in all the latitude of its various objects, have been accused of being actuated by a spirit of *factious opposition* to the present administration. This consideration naturally made one desirous of placing his opinions, and the grounds of them, before the world, that they might speak for themselves, and that it might be seen that they have, at *least*, a sufficient foundation, in *reason*, to exempt them from the suspicion of originating in personal and unworthy motives. But, this is not all. The subject itself is one of the deepest interest. No question has arisen, in my opinion, (said Mr. R.) since we assumed our equal rank among the nations of the earth, not excepting the late declaration of war against Great Britain, fearful and momentous as that was, which involves more important consequences to the peace, happiness, and free political institutions of this country. The measure proposed is an *acknowledged* departure from the uniform and settled policy pursued by this Government in times past—a policy, in the observance of which we have reaped the most abundant fruits of prosperity and honour. It seeks to introduce a *new system* in the conduct and adjustment of our foreign relations. While we profess to cultivate “peace, commerce, and honest friendship,” with *all* nations, this system proposes to connect us, by ties of a more *intimate* and *fraternal* character, with the nations of one-half of the globe, by which we are to be segregated *from*, and in a manner, arrayed *against* those of the other half; by which we are to make *common cause* with the former, in the defence of their new-born and yet precarious independence; and, in short, to identify our interests, and unite our destinies with theirs.

If this be the true character of the measure now under consideration, and, in my conscience, I most solemnly believe that it is, it becomes us to *weigh* it well before we give it the irrevocable sanction of our votes in this Hall. That we have the *right* thus freely to deliberate upon it, has not yet been *openly* questioned in the progress of this discussion; but the idea has been suggested, in *conversation* that, as the Constitution has confided to the President and Senate the power of making appointments, and as Ministers to Panama have been appointed by them, we have no longer any discretion upon the subject, but are *bound* to make the appropriations necessary for defraying the expenses of the mission. Such, sir, is not the doctrine of the President himself, who has shown no disposition to concede, *with too much facility*, powers to other departments of the Government, in derogation of his own. In his message, both to this House and the Senate, he submits the subject to the “*free determination*” of the Legislature. Neither was this the doctrine of this House, in '96, when these seats were filled with some of the wisest men who have adorned any portion of our annals. On



that occasion, the House of Representatives, in a much more doubtful case—in the case of a treaty, which had been duly ratified—affirmed their right, in the freest and fullest manner, to grant or withhold an appropriation of money, or any other act necessary to carry the treaty into effect. A treaty is *a mutual and solemn contract between two parties*: and, when it has been consummated, with all the forms prescribed by the Constitution, there is *plausibility*, at least, in contending, that it *binds the faith* of the nation, and is *obligatory* upon all the authorities of the Government. But the appointment of ministers is an act confined to one party only, inferring no obligation to any other: and there can be no ground for saying, that the *faith of the nation is pledged* by it. But, sir, why need I dwell upon this objection? Have we been engaged in a *solemn farce* for the last two months? Wherefore have we repeated call after call, upon the Executive for information, and received from the Executive communication after communication in relation to this subject, if not to enable us to decide, whether we *would or would not* grant the appropriation which has been asked of us? Did it need all this preparation to qualify us for an act which we were bound, in any event, to perform? was it proper, on the one part, to ask, or, on the other, to give so much *light*, if we were compelled, *blindly and implicitly*, to sanction the measure proposed?

Although I cannot suppose, therefore, that this objection will be seriously insisted on, yet, one of a similar character has been earnestly pressed by the gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Webster) who addressed the Committee two days ago. He contended, that the amendment of the gentleman from Delaware was an irregular interference with the Executive authority, in attempting to give *instructions* to our Ministers. Sir, the amendment seeks to give no instructions. It is simply an expression of the opinion of this House respecting certain objects supposed to be contemplated by the mission to Panama. What, sir, is the case? The President asks of us an appropriation of money, to carry into effect a measure admitted to be novel and unprecedented in its character, and, for the purpose of recommending it to our favour, he states various objects, which *he* deems to be of high interest to the nation, proposed to be attained by it. *We* consider some of these objects to be inexpedient, and dangerous to the peace of the country, while others among them may be of such a character as to justify the adoption of the measure. In granting the funds, therefore, necessary for carrying the measure into effect, we undertake to declare our opinion, that, in *its execution*, it ought not to be extended to those objects which we have thus decided to be incompatible with the interests of the nation. Now, sir, is there any improper assumption of power in this? The objection presupposes that we may withhold the appropriation of money altogether, if we choose; or, in other words, that we may decide the mission to be inexpedient, in reference to *all* its objects. But if we may pronounce *all* its objects, to be inexpedient, we may surely pronounce some of them to be so. The greater power necessarily includes the less.

But the same gentleman objects again to the amendment, that it

amounts to a *conditional grant*. The honourable mover disclaims all intention of introducing his amendment into the appropriation bill, or annexing it in the nature of a *condition* to the grant of the funds asked for. Sir, I care not for *form*. For myself, I am free to say, that I should consider the adoption of the amendment, in *moral effect* at least, as a *conditional grant*, and that if the President employs the funds thus placed at his disposal, he *ought not* to use them for purposes inconsistent with the declared views of those who granted them. There is nothing revolting to my mind in the idea of a *conditional grant*. It is admitted by the gentleman from Massachusetts that we have the right to grant or withhold the appropriation, at our discretion. If so, we may certainly impose what limitations we think proper upon our grant. *Cujus est dare, ejus est disponere*.

But, Sir, there seems to me to be a *peculiar* propriety resulting from the character of this subject, and the *constitutional* relation in which we stand to it, in the freest expression of our opinions, *regardless of all form*. It is not unfrequently said, and has been repeated in the course of this discussion, that the Constitution has confided to the President and Senate, the control of our foreign affairs. Sir, there cannot be a greater mistake than this. The most important question connected with our foreign relations, the question of peace or war, is wholly subject to the determination of the Legislative Department, of which this House is not the least prominent branch. Upon all measures, therefore, involving this question, *however remotely*, it is our right and our duty to deliberate, and to decide with unrestrained freedom. Now, Sir, what is the character of the proposed mission to Panama? Some of its objects, as I hope to show in the progress of my remarks, have a direct aspect to a state of war, upon the occurrence of certain contingencies. In regard to these, we should renounce our highest *constitutional privilege* and betray our most solemn *constitutional trust*, were we not to speak out boldly and without reserve.

But our *confidence* in the Executive is invoked, and we are asked, why not *trust* the President on this, as on other occasions, to employ the means which we may put at his disposal, for the best interests of the nation? Sir, this is not an ordinary case; it calls not for *confidence*, but for the *independent exercise of our own judgments*. In ordinary cases, when the President wants the means of carrying into effect any measure within the province of the Executive Department, he asks us for an appropriation of money for the purpose, in *general* terms, and we grant it without further inquiry. But here, the measure being novel and extraordinary, he accompanies his application for the means, with a detail of his reasons for the adoption of the measure itself, and the various objects he proposes to accomplish by it. It becomes then an appeal to our understandings, upon the sufficiency of those reasons, and the propriety and expediency of the objects contemplated. If we agree with the President in his views, we grant the means, not upon *confidence*, but upon *previous consideration and approval*. If we differ with him, we withhold the means, because we cannot approve the measure. A demand of *confidence* in relation to any Executive measure, can be fairly urged only

when we are unapprised of the *specific views and intentions* with which that measure is undertaken. If those views and intentions are disclosed, we must first decide upon *them*, before we can decide upon the measure itself. I disclaim, sir, all feelings of violent jealousy and distrust toward the Executive; on the contrary, in a proper case, I would go as far as any man ought to go, on the principle of even a *liberal* confidence in the Executive, in regard to all measures falling within the constitutional sphere of that department of the Government. I believe, sir, in the language of a great man, who once presided in that Department, that a certain degree of confidence is necessary "to give firmness and effect to the legal administration of our affairs." Upon this principle, if the measure now under consideration, unprecedented as it is, had come before us in the form of a naked recommendation, depending upon Executive responsibility alone, I might have been induced to concur in affording the means necessary for its execution, without further inquiry. But presented to us as it is, with an explicit avowal of its objects, some of which we believe to be dangerous to the peace and highest interests of the nation—under these circumstances, to ask of us an *unqualified* grant of the means necessary for its execution, is to ask, not a *relinquishment merely*, but a *sacrifice* of our judgments—not *confidence* in others, but *treachery* to ourselves and our country.

In deciding the question submitted to us, then, we must dismiss all extraneous considerations, and look exclusively to the intrinsic merits of the measure itself, or, in other words, to the character of the objects proposed to be accomplished by it. So many and such various objects have been suggested, as the motives of this extraordinary measure, that the mind is bewildered, and lost in confusion, amid their multiplicity; and it is exceedingly difficult to fix the attention long enough upon any one of them, to estimate its precise bearing on the general proposition. But, in reviewing them again and again, my attention has been forcibly arrested by two, of a character so portentous to the peace and happiness of the country, that were all the rest not only innocent and safe, but in the highest degree useful and important, I could not lend my concurrence to the measure, while *they* continued to be embraced within its scope. The two objects alluded to, are resistance to the interference of any third power in the quarrel between Spain and her late colonies, and opposition to all future colonization on either continent of America. So general seems to be the impression of the danger and inexpediency of *committing* ourselves, in relation to these topics, that the consideration of the propriety of the Mission to Panama, with a large majority of persons, has assumed the shape of an inquiry whether we *are likely to be so committed—not whether we ought to be.*—Some of the friends of the mission earnestly deny that there is any reason to apprehend that we shall be committed upon these topics, by any thing proposed to be done at Panama, while others, who have more carefully explored the evidence, observe a discreet silence upon the subject. Although these topics evidently constituted the original inducement, the *primum mobile* of the invitation given us to attend the Congress at Panama, yet, in the elaborate report of the Committee of Foreign Relations, there is not the slightest allusion to them.



In the Message of the President, although alluded to, they are overlaid and smothered by other matter; and there is a manifest *shyness* in approaching them, on this floor.

How it has happened that these objects, which originally stood in the front of the picture, have been thus shifted to the back ground, where they are almost lost in the obscurity of the distance, it is not for me to explain; but believing that they are all important in giving its true character and expression to the *piece*, I shall bring them forward, in full relief, to their proper position upon the canvass. I shall undertake to prove, from an examination of the documents in our possession, that, if Ministers are sent to the Congress at Panama, our Government is committed to take part in its deliberations, relating to *these objects*—that they are the principal, if not the only objects, in which our participation was sought, by the States who invited our attendance—and that the result of our participation in them will most probably be the adoption of measures endangering the future peace of the country. In the prosecution of this plan, it will be beside my purpose to inquire, how far a Congress, which has the power to “fix” and “determine” the respective military and naval contingents, or their equivalents, which are to be furnished by parties engaged in a common war, which has too, the farther power of “interpreting the treaties” that may be made, and of “arbitrating the differences” that may arise among those parties, can be justly denominated a *diplomatic meeting*, or a *consultative body*, merely. Whether the Congress be sovereign or consultative, legislative or diplomatic, still the objects I have indicated are to be acted upon by it, and in a manner exposing the peace of the nation to the most serious hazards. Nor shall I inquire how far it is consistent with our professions of neutrality, in the existing war between Spain and her late colonies, to take part in the proceedings of a Congress, which has evidently grown out of *the exigencies of that war*, and the avowed and leading object of which is to combine the resources, and to unite the efforts of the belligerents on one side, in a *more vigorous prosecution of it*—a Congress, too, whose occasional secret sittings, as they would afford a convenient cover for our participation in its hostile deliberations, might well excite suspicions as to the good faith with which we observed our declaration, not to share in its counsels of that character. I shall also forbear to consider any of the various objects, other than those I have already referred to, which have been suggested as proper for our joint consultations in the Congress of Panama. All those objects, in my opinion, have been shown to be useless, impertinent, mischievous, impracticable, or attainable, with equal advantage, in the usual mode of diplomatic negotiation. It will be sufficient for my purpose, if I establish the propositions I have undertaken to maintain, in relation to the two *prominent objects* (so far as we are concerned) of the Congress at Panama, found in the means of *resisting* the interference of any third power, in the war between Spain and the Southern Republics,<sup>1</sup> and the mode of opposing colonization on either continent of America.

My first proposition is, that, if we send ministers to the Congress of Panama, our Government stands *committed* to take part in its deliberations relating to these objects. Now, sir, to determine this

point, let us refer to the terms of the invitation, addressed to us, and the terms of its acceptance. It will be recollected by the committee, that the ministers of Mexico and Colombia, justly doubting how far it would consist with the policy heretofore pursued by our Government to accept an invitation to the Congress at Panama, previously consulted the Secretary of State, to know whether "it would be agreeable or not to the United States to receive such an invitation." The delicacy which marked the conduct of these ministers is highly honorable to them. Their object was to leave us *unembarrassed* by the consideration of the wishes or feelings of their Governments, and in a condition of perfect freedom, to decide according to *our own views of our own interests*. The Secretary of State informed them that the President believed, that the proposed Congress might be highly useful in several respects, but thought it expedient to adjust beforehand certain preliminary points, such as "*the subjects to which the attention of the Congress was to be directed,*" and some other matters of a similar character; and added, that, if these points could be arranged in a manner satisfactory to the United States, the President would be disposed to accept the proffered invitations. For the purpose of satisfying this requisition, more particularly as it regarded the subjects of deliberation in the proposed Congress, the Mexican and Colombian Ministers addressed to Mr. Clay their respective letters of the 2d and 3d of November. What, sir, does the Mexican Minister say? The following extract from his letter will show: "The Government of the subscriber never supposed nor desired, that the United States of America would take part in the Congress about to be held, in other matters than those, which, from their nature and importance, the late Administration pointed out and characterized as being of *general interest to the Continent*; for which reason, one of the subjects which will occupy the attention of the Congress, will be the *resistance* or opposition to the interference of any neutral nation, in the question and war of independence, between the new Powers of the Continent and Spain. The Government of the undersigned apprehends, that, as the powers of America *are of accord as to resistance*, it behoves them to discuss the means of giving to that resistance all possible force, that the evil may be met, if it cannot be avoided; and the only means of accomplishing this object is, by a previous concert as to the mode in which each of them shall lend its co-operation; for otherwise, resistance would operate but partially, and in a manner much less certain and effective. The opposition to colonization in America, by the European Powers, will be another of the questions which may be discussed, and which is in like predicament with the foregoing. After these two *principal subjects*, the Representatives of the United States of America may be occupied upon others, to which the existence of the new States may give rise: and which it is not easy to point out or enumerate; for which the Government of the United States of Mexico will give instructions, and ample powers to its Commissioners, and it trusts that those from the other powers may bear the same." And again—"To which end, and in compliance with the tenor of the conversations held with the honorable Secretary of State, the underwritten Minister Plenipotentiary, invites this Government to send Represent-

tatives to the Congress of Panama, with authorities as aforesaid, and with express instructions in their credentials upon the *two principal questions* ; in which step he is likewise joined by the Minister of Colombia, and with which he trusts he has fulfilled all that was stipulated to this end." Now, sir, let us see the language of Mr. Clay's answer. He says, "The President has therefore resolved, should the Senate of the United States, now expected to assemble in a few days, give their advice and consent to send Commissioners to the Congress of Panama. Whilst they will not be authorized to enter upon any deliberations, or to concur in any acts, inconsistent with the *present* neutral position of the United States, and its obligations, they will be fully empowered and instructed upon all questions likely to arise in the Congress on *subjects in which the nations of America have a common interest.*"

It will be remarked by the Committee, that the Mexican Minister, in his letter, had not only referred to the sentiment of the late Administration that the two topics of obtrusive interference in the existing war, and colonization in America, were matters of common interest to both Continents, but had himself expressly characterized them as "*subjects of general interest to all the American Powers.*" Mr. Clay, in replying to his letter, and accepting the invitation it conveyed, tells him, "our Minister will be fully empowered and instructed upon all questions likely to arise in the Congress, on *subjects in which the nations of America have a common interest.*" By thus responding to the sentiment of the Mexican Minister, and adopting the terms in which he had described these two subjects, Mr. Clay, must be understood as referring to them as unequivocally, as if he had specifically named them. The promise of our Government, then, is here solemnly given, that our ministers will be authorized to act upon the two subjects I have mentioned. Mr. Clay's answer to the letter of the Colombian Minister, is not furnished ; but we are told it was "similar," to the one just read. In his answer to the letter of the Minister from Central America, he uses very nearly the *same* language, with one variation, however, which adds to the force of the argument I have urged. He tells this Minister that our representatives in the Congress will be empowered to act upon subjects in which the nations of America (not "have," which was his language to the Mexican Minister, but) "may be *supposed* to have" a common interest. It is thus, sir, I think, shown, beyond a doubt, that, if we send Ministers to the Congress of Panama, our Government is *committed* so far as the acts of the Executive can commit it, to take part in the deliberations of the Congress, upon the subjects of political interference, and attempted colonization, by the Powers of Europe.

My next proposition is, that these subjects, however, or for whatever reason they may have been kept out of sight recently, are the *principal*, if not the only subjects in which our participation was desired by the States who invited our attendance at the Congress of Panama. In the extract I have already read to the committee, from the letter of the Mexican Minister, he expressly styles them the "*two principal subjects*" for consultation with the United States ; and indeed they are the *only* subjects specified by him. It is true that the



Colombian Minister suggests, in a loose and general way, some other subjects which might engage the attention of the United States in the Congress of Panama. But he dwells on these two with particular and emphatic earnestness, as "points of great interest," and "of immediate utility to the American States that are at war with Spain," and strongly appeals to the co-operation of this Government in relation to them.

I will now proceed to show that there is every reason to believe, from what has already passed between our Government and the Spanish American States, that the result of our participation in these subjects at the Congress of Panama, will be the adoption of measures endangering the future peace of the country. Sir, the *principle* of resistance by force, is already agreed upon. Nothing remains but to adjust the *details* connected with its execution, and to consummate the *understanding* which has already taken place by entering into a *formal compact*. In the very pregnant extract from the letter of the Mexican Minister, to which I have already had occasion twice to refer, he says, "as the powers of America are of *accord as to resistance*," it behoves them "to discuss the means of giving to that *resistance* all possible *force*," and to determine by a "previous concert, in what mode each party is to lend its co-operation;" and we are invited to the Congress at Panama for the purpose of entering upon this "discussion," and arranging the terms of this "concert," or system of "co-operation." Now let us see what the Colombian Minister says: "The manner in which all colonization of European powers on the American continent shall be *resisted*, and their interference in the present contest between Spain and her former colonies prevented, are other points of *great interest*. Were it proper, an eventual alliance, in case these events should occur, which is within the range of possibilities, and the treaty, of which no use should be made until the *casus fœderis* should happen, to remain secret; or if this should seem premature, a convention so anticipated would be different means to secure the same end of preventing foreign influence. This is a matter of *immediate utility* to the American States that are at war with Spain, and is *in accordance with the repeated declarations and protests of the cabinet at Washington*. The conferences held on this subject being confidential, would increase mutual friendship, and promote the respective interests of the parties." The Secretary of State, in his answer to these letters, does not express any *dissent* from the propositions or statements contained in them; from which I will not argue, although I might do so with great *plausibility*, that he is to be considered as *assenting* to the particular *measure of policy*, suggested in the extract last read. But this I do contend for; that, so far as those letters undertake to state *matters of fact*, the omission of the Secretary to qualify or deny, is a full *admission* of them. It is a rule of familiar application, in the investigation of evidence in private controversies, that whatever is affirmed by one party, in the presence of the other, and not denied, is considered as admitted by the latter, and has all the effect of a *positive confession* against him. Now what is this case? The Mexican Minister says, in his letter to Mr. Clay, "The powers of

America," (including the United States, of course,) "*are of accord as to resistance.*" The Colombian Minister, after suggesting a particular measure to secure the joint efforts of the parties in this *resistance*, says, "*This is in accordance with the repeated declarations and protests of the cabinet at Washington.*" Mr. Clay does not gain-say either of these assertions, and does, therefore, in effect, admit them to be true.

But, sir, we have direct and positive evidence upon this subject, under the hand of the Secretary himself. In our diplomatic intercourse with the Spanish American States, he has *treated and held out* to them certain vague and oracular expressions in a message of the late President, as a *pledge*, on the part of the United States, not to *permit* any interference of the European Powers in the war between them and the mother country. When, during the last Summer, a French fleet appeared in the West Indies, with the supposed design of taking possession of the Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, and an appeal was made to us by those States to interpose in their behalf, Mr. Clay recurred to this "*memorable pledge*," as he expressly calls it, and in fulfilment and practical recognition of it as a *pledge in fact*, he wrote to Mr. Brown, our Minister to France, instructing him to say to that Government, that we "*could not consent to the occupation of those Islands by any European power other than Spain, under any contingency whatever.*" He afterwards communicated a copy of this letter to Mr. Poinsett, our Minister to Mexico, and *authorized him to read it to the functionaries of that Government as an interpretation of our policy towards the States of Spanish America, and "what we were prepared to do," in their behalf.* If this proceeding does not *commit* the Executive of the United States, (so far as *they* have power to decide the question,) to the point of *resistance*, upon the happening of a certain event, I am utterly at a loss to conceive what could have such an effect.

We have heretofore seen that our Minister to Mexico, acting under the authority of, and in presumed obedience to, the Secretary of State, had stated to that Government, "*that the United States had pledged themselves not to permit any third power to interfere either with the independence or form of Government of the new States.*" But we are now told by the Secretary that the "*United States have made no such pledge;*" or, as he explains himself, have "*contracted no engagement*" to that effect. Sir, I never supposed that any *treaty* had been entered into with these States, by which we were bound to maintain their independence; and this is all that the assertion of the Secretary of State amounts to. It does not contradict the idea that *official declarations* have been made, and *formal assurances of support* given to these governments in the name of the United States. Sir, it is impossible for any man to examine the documents before us with an impartial eye, and disguise from himself the fact, that it is a thing *perfectly understood and agreed* between the diplomatic functionaries of this and the Spanish American Governments, that all America is to make a *common cause* in maintaining, by *force*, the doctrines of a new public code, which Mr. Clay, (feeling that new things require new names,) calls "*inter-continental*," not *inter-national*, "*law*;" and the purpose for which we are summoned to the Congress of Panama,



is to carry this understanding into effect, by entering into formal conventional stipulations upon the subject.

Now, Sir, let us inquire what will probably be the nature and effect of these stipulations, as regards the United States. We have seen that one of the Spanish American Ministers has suggested an "eventual alliance, to be kept secret until the *casus fœderis* occurs," as proper to be adopted. Another, without pointing out any particular *form* of agreement, insists, in general, upon the propriety of adopting some "previous concert," or plan of "co-operation." Let us now see what are the views of our own Government upon this subject; and for that purpose, I beg leave to read to the Committee the following extract from the message of the President to this House. He says, "The late President of the United States, in his Message to Congress of the 2d of December, 1823, while announcing the negotiation then pending with Russia, relating to the Northwest Coast of this continent, observed, that the occasion of the discussion to which that incident had given rise, had been taken for asserting as a principle, in which the rights and interests of the United States were involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they had assumed and maintained, were thenceforward not to be considered as subjects for future colonization, by any European Power. The principle had first been assumed in that negotiation with Russia. It rested upon a course of reasoning equally simple and conclusive. With the exception of the existing European colonies, which it was in no wise intended to disturb, the two continents consisted of several sovereign and independent nations, *whose territories covered their whole surface*. By this, their independent condition, the United States enjoyed the right of commercial intercourse with every part of their possessions. To attempt the establishment of a colony in those possessions, would be to usurp, to the exclusion of others, a commercial intercourse which was the common possession of all. It could not be done without encroaching upon existing rights of the United States. The Government of Russia has never disputed these positions, nor manifested the slightest dissatisfaction at their having been taken. Most of the new American Republics have declared their entire assent to them; and they now propose, among the subjects of consultation at Panama, to take into consideration the means of making effectual the assertion of that principle, as well as the means of resisting interference from abroad, with the domestic concerns of the American Governments. In alluding to these means, it would obviously be premature at this time to anticipate that which is offered merely as matter for consultation; or to pronounce upon those measures which have been, or may be suggested. The purpose of this Government is to concur in none which would import hostility to Europe, or justly excite resentment in any of her States. Should it be advisable to contract any conventional engagement on this topic, our views would extend no further than to a mutual pledge of the parties to the compact to maintain the principle in application to its own territory, and to permit no colonial lodgements or establishment of European jurisdiction upon its own soil; and, with respect to the obtrusive interference from abroad, if its future character may be inferred from that which has been, and perhaps still is exercised in more than one of the

new States, a joint declaration of its character, and exposure of it to the world, may be probably all that the occasion would require. Whether the United States should or should not be parties to such a declaration, may justly form a part of the deliberation. That there is an evil to be remedied, needs little insight into the secret history of late years to know, and that this remedy may best be concerted at the Panama meeting, deserves at least the experiment of consideration."

Now, sir, although this passage is conceived in the true spirit of diplomatic reserve, it contains suggestions which, in my opinion, are full of danger. What does the President here propose, as proper to be done at Panama, upon the subject of colonization? The formation of a "compact," by which each party shall be "pledged to maintain the principle, in application to its *own territory*." The President cannot be understood to mean any thing so nugatory and degrading to the character of the nation as a *solemn stipulation*, by which we are to *bind ourselves to other parties*, to defend our *acknowledged* territorial limits from violation and encroachment. He must mean something other and more than this. He must mean, *at the least*, that the parties to the proposed compact are to be mutually pledged to maintain the principle, in reference to all the territories respectively *claimed* by them. It might, indeed, be well supposed, (as he assumes, in a preceding part of the passage quoted, that the "territories" of the United States and of the Spanish American States "cover the whole surface" of both continents, "with the exception of that portion occupied by existing European colonies only,") that he meant to give to the proposed pledge a corresponding extension. But, with the utmost *restriction* of its meaning which it would be consistent with a due respect for the President to make the pledge proposed by him, must be understood as intended to operate to the extent of all the territories respectively *claimed* by the parties to the compact. This renders it necessary to inquire, for a moment, into the state of our territorial rights on the Northwest coast of America, which has been so long the subject of conflicting claims and discordant negotiations. As the amendment which I have had the honor to offer to the proposition of the gentleman from Delaware, refers to this subject, and as the Committee have not had occasion to turn their attention particularly to it, I hope I shall be excused for some little detail in relation to it.

The United States claim the whole of the country on that coast between the 42d and the 51st parallel of north latitude, by a title which they have always held to be *unquestionable*—the prior discovery of the Columbia river by one of their own citizens. They also formerly claimed the whole country from the 51st to the 60th degree of north latitude, but upon a different and inferior ground. The foundation of our claim to this portion of the Northwest coast was the title of Spain, derived to us under the treaty of 1819, which title, although not complete in itself, we contended was superior to that of any other nation. We have since relinquished our claim to a portion of this country, in favour of Russia, and the boundary between us and the Russian settlements, is now, I understand, permanently fixed, by a convention, at about the 54th parallel of north lat-

itude, leaving our claims to the country between that and the 51st degree, as founded upon the alleged Spanish title, in *statu quo*. Great Britain controverts our claim to various portions of this territory, as well between the 42d and the 51st degree of north latitude, where we have considered our title complete and unquestionable, as between the 51st and 54th degrees, where our title, though not complete in itself, is, as we have alledged, superior to that of any other nation. She has actual settlements and trading establishments, within these limits; and sustains her claim to the country by alleged prior discovery, and continued and uninterrupted occupation, and upon grounds so plausible, at least, as to have occasioned a difference of opinion in a committee of this House, in relation to the validity of our claims in their full extent. This controversy is now, and has been, for many years, the subject of negotiation between the two Governments.

In this state of things, is it, I ask, safe, or prudent, or wise, for us to enter into a compact with the Spanish American States, to maintain a principle, which may bring us at once into hostile collision with the most powerful nation in the world? The President takes occasion to tell us, that the "Government of Russia has never disputed the positions we have asserted upon this subject, nor manifested the slightest dissatisfaction at their having been taken." He does not think proper to tell us how they have been received by the Government of Great Britain. Permit me, sir, to supply his omission. In a letter from Mr. Rush, while Minister in London, to the President himself, then Secretary to State, he says, "It is proper now, as on the question of the St. Lawrence, that I should give you faithful information of the manner in which the British Plenipotentiaries received my proposal, and the principles under which I had introduced it. I may set out, by saying, in a word, that they *totally declined* the one, and *totally denied* the other. They said that Great Britain considered *the whole of the unoccupied parts of America, as being open to her future settlements in like manner as heretofore*. They included within these parts, as well that portion of the Northwest coast, lying between the 42d and 51st degrees of latitude, as any other parts. The principle of *colonization* on that coast, or elsewhere, on any portion of those continents, not yet occupied, Great Britain was not prepared to relinquish: neither was she prepared to accede to the exclusive claim of the United States." In another part of the same letter, Mr. Rush says, "Such is a summary of the grounds taken at the very outset by the British Plenipotentiaries, in opposition to our claims. On my remarking immediately, and before proceeding to any discussion of them, that I had not before been aware of the extent and character of all these objections, they replied, that it was also, for the first time, that they had been apprized, in any authentic and full way, of the nature of the claims, as I had now stated them, on behalf of the United States; claims which they said, they were bound to declare, at once, Great Britain was wholly unprepared to admit; and especially that which aimed at *interdicting her from the right of future colonization in America*." In the protocol of the conference between Mr. Rush and the British Plenipotentiaries, upon this subject, their dissent from the princi-



ples advanced by us, is still more strongly stated. "The British Plenipotentiaries, asserted in *utter denial of the above principle*, that they consider the unoccupied parts of America just as much open as heretofore, to colonization by Great Britain, as well as by other European powers."

Now, sir, seeing how earnestly our presensions upon this subject are contested by the British Government, does it not become us to *pause*, before we enter into a *compact*, by which we shall be bound to maintain them, at whatever hazard or expense? Is the hostility of Great Britain, a *war*, even with her, so light a thing, that we are to rush into it, not only without "counting the cost," but without bestowing a thought on the justice of our cause? If, according to the political *chivalry* of the day, we are to "take counsel," as the President tells us, "not of our fears, but of our rights;" let us at least be satisfied of the existence of these *rights*, before we discard our *fears*. But so far as our *territorial claims* are made the foundation of the principle advanced by our Government, in relation to future colonization upon this continent, we have seen that these *claims* are not only controverted by others, but the subject of serious doubt, even among ourselves; and our Minister in London seemed to recognize the *weight of the objections* urged against them, when he told the British Plenipotentiaries, that "he had not before been *aware* of the character and extent of all these objections." If the principle be attempted to be supported, upon any other ground, it is, in my opinion, *wholly unsustainable*, and is to be classed among those *inventions* of modern diplomacy, which are to be defended, not by the *sword*, but by the *pen*. But, sir, if we were most thoroughly satisfied of the justice of this principle, why should we commit ourselves to its *support*, by any *compact* with our South American neighbours? We do not want *their aid* in defending our rights, and if we did, we should not obtain it by the compact proposed, as each party is to be pledged to maintain the principle, *separately*, in application to its own territory. I trust, sir, I have shown to the satisfaction of the committee, the danger, and inexpediency of adopting the measure suggested by the President, upon the subject of colonization, and that they will not sanction the Mission to Panama, with reference to any such object.

Let us now see what he suggests, in reference to the subject of interference from abroad, with the affairs of Spanish America. "A joint declaration of its character, and *exposure of it to the world*, may be *probably all* that the occasion would require." The nature and effect of this proposition, deserves to be profoundly considered. Should the United States concur in such a declaration, in what situation would the nation then stand? Would they not be *committed* to support it by *force*? A declaration of the sort proposed, is no *idle vaunt*, no *parade of words merely*. It is a solemn appeal to the *world*, upon the justice of the cause which the parties have espoused, and implies a firm determination to support it with all their energies. How would we, the *war making power of the Government*, stand, in relation to the subject? We are apprized, before hand, by the Executive, that such a declaration is among the objects of the mission to Panama, and with this knowledge, we give our *unqualified*

sanction to the mission. The proposed declaration goes forth to the world, and is not heeded by the powers, on whom it is intended to operate. Under these circumstances, would the *honor of the nation* admit of any retreat for us? In short, sir, is not the declaration proposed a *conditional*, or, to use more diplomatic phraseology, a *provisional declaration of war*, to take effect whensoever a certain event shall occur? If so, I ask, is the mind of this nation *finally made up* to go to war for the independence of Spanish America? No gentleman, I presume, will say so. But even if it were, why should we proclaim this determination, *beforehand*, in such a manner as to preclude ourselves from the benefit of full and free deliberation, in regard to every circumstance of *expediency*, as well as *justice*, which ought to influence our decision, when the occasion may arrive.

But, it may be said that there is no reason to apprehend the interference, which it is proposed thus to denounce to the world. If this be so, then I say the denunciation is a species of *bravado*, which it does not become the dignity of this nation to engage in. If otherwise, we should *pause*, before we assume upon ourselves the fearful responsibilities it may involve. It is true that Mr. Clay, in a communication lately made to this House, tells us, "that apprehensions of interference have ceased;" but, on the other hand, the President, in the portion of his message which I have read to the committee, speaking of the same matter, says, "that there *is an evil* to be remedied, needs little insight into the secret history of late years to know; and that this *remedy* may best be concerted at the Panama meeting, deserves at least the experiment of consideration." The minister of Colombia strongly corroborates this intimation of the President, and expresses a suspicion that a *covert* interference has already taken place. In a letter of the 30th of December last, addressed by him to Mr. Clay, he says, "Spain, in spite of her nullity, does not cease in her efforts to augment the army of America, so far as to induce us to suspect that a foreign hand *affords these aids*, which are by no means in harmony with the scantiness of the resources of the Peninsula." Now, sir, if we are to *commit* ourselves to go to war on behalf of the States of Spanish America, in the event of interference of a third power in the quarrel between them and Spain, the obligation will depend, I presume, upon the *fact*, and not upon the *form*, of interference. Whether that interference be by openly sending fleets and armies, to fight the battles of Spain, or by secretly furnishing the means with which those fleets and armies are procured and supported, the injury to our Southern friends will be the same, and the obligation upon us, to repel it, will consequently be the same.

But sir, seeing the dangerous extent of the consequences involved in these measures suggested by the President, it may be said, he does not express a *positive* opinion that they ought or will be adopted at the Congress of Panama. Sir, they are evidently brought forward as the result of previous deliberation, and seem to be offered as *substitutes* for the projects which had been presented by the Spanish American Ministers. They must, therefore, have been duly weighed; and, it is fair to presume, that the President would not have suggested them at all, if he had not been prepared, on his part, for their adoption, or at least thought them entitled to the most *favourable*

*consideration.* That the President has made up his mind to concur in these, or other measures, of an equivalent character, is farther manifested by a subsequent part of his message, in which he labours to show that the advice of General Washington, to "have, with foreign nations, as little political connexion as possible," is *inapplicable* to our relations with the States of this hemisphere.—Why should the President have made this *attempt*—(how he has succeeded in it, I hope hereafter to show)—unless his object was to form, with the nations alluded to, those, "political connexions," against which the advice of Washington was directed?

But a *quietus* is found for all our apprehensions, in the assurances of the President, that "no alliances will be contracted," and, in general, that "nothing will be done incompatible with our neutrality," or, "importing hostility to Europe." Sir, many things may be done which would commit the future peace of this country, and yet not amount to an *alliance*, or a *violation of neutrality*, or an *act of hostility* to Europe. I have endeavoured to show, and I hope I have shown, to the satisfaction of the committee, that the measures suggested by the President himself, have a direct tendency to commit the peace of the country, and yet it cannot be said that they constitute an alliance, or a breach of neutrality, or an act of hostility to Europe. The President has given us a *practical* interpretation of the meaning of his declarations upon this subject, by recommending measures, whose unquestionable tendency it is to commit the peace of the nation, in *certain contingencies*, at the *very time* that he disclaims all intention of entering into alliances, or of doing any thing which would be incompatible with our neutrality, or import hostility to Europe. Sir, I do not mean to question the integrity and good faith of the President's declarations. I am not afraid that *he intends to deceive us*; but the consequences may be equally fatal, if *we deceive ourselves*. Let us not shut our eyes against the light, because it may disclose to us unwelcome dangers. Let us take the declarations of the President in the sense in which they were made. Let us understand them as *he* understands them; and, when so understood, they afford, in my opinion, no security for the peace of the nation.

But, it is said, if we have no security in the declarations of the President, we have a refuge, which cannot fail us, in the supervising power of the Senate, over whatever may be done by our Ministers at Panama. Sir, in the ordinary case of a treaty, negotiated *without previous consultation with the Senate*, this might be so. In such a case the Senate would be *free* to act, upon a subject, submitted, *for the first time* to their consideration, according to the views which the occasion might suggest; but, in the present instance, they are consulted *beforehand*—they are fully apprised of the objects and views with which the mission is instituted—and, with all this information, they give it their *unqualified* sanction. Under, these circumstances, would they not stand *committed*, to ratify any measure which should legitimately spring from the objects and views that had been thus *avowed* to them? I think, sir, they unquestionably would.

We must, then, in deciding upon the measure submitted to our consideration, look to *its probable and legitimate results*, as forming *a part of the measure itself*, and not vainly rely upon any other de-



partment of the government to avert those results. Sir, this mission is the *first step*, in a new scheme of foreign policy, which, if taken, will draw after it the adoption of the whole system. We are now called upon, therefore, to decide, *definitively*, whether we will give our sanction to this new system. It is well known to the members of this committee, that there are two distinct plans of policy in regard to our South American neighbours, each of which has its advocates and supporters. The one proposes to conduct our intercourse with them upon principles of the utmost liberality and kindness, but at the same time, to avoid embarrassing "*political connexions*," with them. The other, pretending that it sees some moral and physical necessity which binds together in one common fate, the destinies of North and South America, aims to unite them, by the ties of a more intimate association, under one *grand cis-atlantic confederacy*, in imitation of the bright exemplar of the Holy Alliance of Europe! The former is the system of Washington, the Father of his Country—of the sages and patriots of the Revolution—of the statesmen of the early and purer eras of the Republic. The latter is the system of a "new school" of politicians. It is the system adopted by the present Administration, and is presented to us under a specious name, appealing at once to the pride of self-love, and the sympathies of an imaginary kindred. It is called the *American system*!

Sir, as this American system owes its origin to the present Secretary of State, I cannot do better than furnish an explanation of it in the words of that gentleman himself. In a speech made by him on this floor in 1820, he gave us the *first outline of this fond conception of an American policy*, in the following significant passages: "What," said he, "would I give, could we appreciate the advantages of pursuing the course I propose. It is in our power to create a *system* of which we shall be the *centre*, and in which all South America will act with us." "Imagine the vast power of the *two* continents, and the value of the intercourse between them, when we shall have a population of forty and they of seventy millions. In relation to South America, the People of the United States will occupy the same position, as the People of New-England do to the rest of the United States." "We shall be the *centre* of a *system* which would constitute the *rallying point* of human freedom against all the depotism of the old world. Let us no longer watch the nod of any *European* politician—Let us become real and true *Americans*, and place ourselves at the head of the *American system*." How freely these principles have been introduced into our diplomacy since the accession of the present Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs, and how effectually they have been instilled by him into the minds of our representatives abroad, the following extracts from a despatch of Mr. Poinsett, our Minister to Mexico, afford abundant proof: "I first objected to the exception in favour of the American nations, formerly Spanish possessions, on the ground, that no distinctions ought to be made between any of the members of the *great American family*; that Great Britain having assented to such a provision, ought not to influence the United States, because the *Republics of America were united by one and the same interest*, and that it was the interest of the European Powers to cause such distinctions to be made, as would

divide it into small confederacies, and, if possible, to prevent us from so uniting, as to *present one front against the attempts of Europe upon our Republican institution*. That it might therefore have been considered by the British plenipotentiaries important to lay the foundation of distinctions, which must disunite us: but that it was much more manifestly our interest, that all the States of America *should be united as intimately as possible*—an union which could only exist on the basis of the most perfect equality and reciprocity.” “To this proposal I instantly replied, that I would prefer agreeing to the article as it stood, rather than consent to be governed by the decision of Great Britain; that our interests were separate and distinct; that nation formed one of the European Powers, and *the United States were the head of the American Powers*; and that in treaties which were intended to strengthen the interests of the latter, no allusion ought to be made to those made with the former: Great Britain had concluded a treaty with these States, in order to secure a profitable commerce with the Americans; but her interests were European, whereas *ours were strictly American*.” “I then recapitulated the course of policy pursued towards the Spanish colonies by our Government, which had so largely contributed to secure their independence and to enable them to take their station among the nations of the earth: and declared *what further we were ready to do in order to defend their rights and liberties*, and that this could only be expected from us, and could only be accomplished, by *a strict union of all the American Republics on terms of perfect equality and reciprocity*; and repeated that it was the obvious policy of Europe to divide us into small confederacies with separate and distinct interests, and as manifestly ours to form a *single great confederacy*, which might oppose one united front to the attacks of our enemies.”

In these passages, the leading principles of the *American system* are so fully developed, the changes are so frequently rung upon all its favourite common places, the idea of a *strict and intimate union* between the nations of North and South America, of the formation of them, indeed, “*into a single great confederacy*,” of which confederacy the United States are to be the “*head*,” is so distinctly brought to view as to supersede the necessity of any attempt on my part to illustrate the true character of this system. Sir, no one can doubt, after seeing the striking coincidence between the passages of Mr. Clay’s speech, which I have read to the committee, and the extracts of Mr. Poinsett’s despatch, that the language of the latter to the Mexican Government, was fully authorized by the former.

But, sir, this *American system* is not confined to the Secretary of State and his diplomatic pupils. The President himself is a proselyte! This system has a peculiar *nomenclature* of its own. It is distinguished by certain *cabalistic* phrases, which, wherever they are used, give infallible signs of its adoption. Of these phrases, the President has made the most copious use in his message to this House, and has, indeed, added some new samples to the original stock. “The fraternity of freedom,” “sister Republics,” (including the Emperor of Brazil I suppose) “nations of this *hemisphere*,” “the Powers of America,” dance through his pages in “all the mazes” of sentimental “*conclusion*.” But, sir, we have still stronger evidence of the Pre-



sident's conversion to this new system. Finding the Farewell Address of General Washington an obstacle in that path of policy which he had determined to pursue, he endeavours to put it aside, and remove it out of his way. He does more. He attempts, with desperate violence, to break into pieces, and pave with its fragments the road he is travelling. He labours to prove, not *negatively* merely, that General Washington's advice *does not* apply to our present condition, but *affirmatively*, that it recommends to us *now*, a course against which it warned us, at the period when it was given. What is the language of the President, sir? "The acceptance of this invitation, therefore, far from conflicting with the counsel or policy of Washington, is *directly deducible from and conformable to it.*"

Now, sir, to determine how far this construction of the President's can be sustained, let us turn to the advice of General Washington, *in his own words*. The language of that great man, which deserves to be as immortal as his fame, was this—"The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connexion as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships and enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one People under an efficient government, *the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance*—when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality, we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation, when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel. Why forego the advantage of so peculiar a situation? *Why quit our own, to stand upon foreign ground?*"

One would think that language so plain, so clear, so unequivocal, could not, by any ingenuity of construction, be tortured into a *recommendation* or *approval* of "political connexions with foreign nations"—the very thing against which it warned us. All that the most intrepid commentator could be supposed capable of contending for, (and that I hope to show, cannot be successfully maintained,) is that, from circumstances which have arisen since the time of Washington, and not foreseen by him, his advice *no longer* applies to our condition, and does *not, therefore, inhibit*, the formation of "political connexions with foreign nations," under these new circumstances. But, sir, the President takes bolder ground. He says the *propriety* of these political connexions is *directly deducible from* "the sound and judicious principles," from the "*very words* of Washington." Now, sir, how does the President make out this deduction? Why, sir, by superinducing his *own words* upon those of Washington. This passage of the President's message is so curious a specimen of criticism and logic

combined, that I beg leave to call the attention of the committee to it. "Compare our situation and the circumstances of that time with those of the present day, and what, from the *very words* of Washington then, would be his *counsels* to his countrymen now? Europe has still her set of primary interests, with which we have little or a remote relation. Our distant and detached situation with reference to Europe, remains the same. But we were then the only independent nation of this hemisphere; and we were surrounded by European colonies, with the greater part of which we had no more intercourse than with the inhabitants of another planet. Those colonies have now been transformed into eight independent nations, extending to our very borders. Seven of them Republics, like ourselves, with whom we have an immensely growing commercial, and *must* have, and have already, important political connexions; with reference to whom, our situation is neither distant nor detached—whose political principles and systems of Government, congenial with our own, must and will have an action and counteraction upon us and ours, to which we cannot be indifferent if we would. The rapidity of our growth, and the consequent increase of our strength, have more than realized the *anticipations* of this admirable political legacy. Thirty years have nearly elapsed since it was written: and in the interval, our population, our wealth, our territorial extension, our power, physical and moral, has nearly trebled. Reasoning upon this state of things, *from the sound and judicious principles of Washington*, and must we not say that *the period which he predicted* as then not far off, has arrived? That America has a set of primary interests, which have none or a remote relation to Europe. That the interference of Europe, therefore, in those concerns, should be spontaneously withheld by her upon the same principles, that we have never interfered with hers; and that, if she should interfere, as she may, by measures which may have a great and dangerous recoil upon ourselves, we might be called, in defence of our own altars and firesides, to take an attitude which would cause our neutrality to be respected, and peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, should counsel."

The President here, after adverting to the rapid growth of the United States in wealth and population, since the date of General Washington's address, asks, "must we not say that *the period which Washington predicted as then not far off, has arrived?*" What period is this? The President goes on to describe it as the period when America shall have her set of primary interests, with which Europe should not interfere, and if she should so interfere, we might be called upon to take an attitude for their defence—at this point, taking up again the language of General Washington's address. It would seem, from the use here made of General Washington's prediction, that *he* had anticipated the period when America would have her set of peculiar interests, and had, in contemplation of that state of things, *indicated* to his countrymen the course of policy which it is now proposed to pursue. But, Sir, there is nothing of all this in the Farewell Address. The period spoken of by General Washington as not far off, was the period when, by our advancement in wealth and power, "under an efficient government, we might defy material injury from external annoyance," &c. General Washington evidently intend-

ed to ground upon this anticipation an additional argument in favour of the policy he had recommended, inasmuch as the ability to defy external annoyance, which he had looked forward to as the result of our remaining one People under an efficient Government, would place us above the necessity of seeking foreign connexions, for the purpose of strengthening ourselves. But this very anticipation, which General Washington had introduced as a strong motive for adhering to the policy of avoiding "political connexions with foreign nations," the President, by a singular metamorphosis, has converted into an instrument for justifying and enforcing a departure from that policy. Sir, do not the heart and the head equally revolt at this perversion of the language and reasoning of General Washington? At the time when his Farewell Address was given to the world, we were yet an infant People; our numbers thinly scattered over an extensive territory; our finances embarrassed, and our resources, of every sort, impaired by the effects of our recent struggle for independence. In this situation, there were inducements to court foreign alliances, to aid and support us in the event of collisions with the rest of the world. If, under these circumstances, when the assistance of powerful friends might have been not only beneficial, but necessary to us, Washington yet advised us to steer clear of foreign alliances and connexions—with how much more force does his advice apply to our present condition—when his anticipations of our national growth, have been most amply realized; when we have already taken such an attitude, as to ensure the respect of other nations, when we have proved ourselves competent to be our *own champions*, and the *successful defenders of our own rights*.

The President has, therefore, in my opinion, wholly failed, not only in his attempt to prove *affirmatively* that the advice of Washington *leads to and approves* the formation of the political connexions in question, but in his endeavour to maintain the inferior negative proposition, that the injunction to avoid such connexions in general, *does not apply* to the particular circumstances of our present condition. On the contrary, it is manifest, for the reasons I have just suggested, that this injunction applies with increased force, to the state in which we now are.—It is true that General Washington *illustrates* his advice by reference to European politics, but the advice itself is not confined to our relations with Europe. In its spirit and its principles, it is universal and immutable, acknowledging no distinction of time or place. In the comprehensive words used by him in a subsequent part of his address, "'tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances *with any portion of the foreign world*."—The parting injunction of the Father of his Country, then, can neither be *construed* nor *reasoned* away. It still continues to admonish us, in its deep and impressive tones, against the fatal policy of entangling ourselves by "political connexions with foreign nations;" whether young or old, whether on this, or the other side of the Atlantic.

Other arguments must be, and have been invented, to sustain this modern *American policy*. I beg leave, briefly, to notice a few of them. We are told, in the first instance, that our own *safety*, our *very existence*, indeed, requires that we should make common cause with the States of Spanish America. The idea entertained by those



who employ this argument, is, I presume, this : that if the Powers of Europe assail the independence of Spanish America, for the purpose of reducing it to its former colonial condition, they must do so with views, and upon principles, which will carry them forward to attempt the conquest of this country. The conquest of the States of North America ! Sir, however lightly I may deem of the wisdom of the crowned heads of Europe, I cannot suppose that any of them are so much under the influence of a disordered imagination, as to have indulged such a thought, even in their nightly visions. How differently, sir, do the new States of Spanish America, and these United States stand, in relation to Europe. The former are infant nations of yesterday, scarcely yet freed from their swaddling bands ; the mother country still asserts her dominion over them, and is now waging war upon them to establish that dominion ; they have been recognized by only one Power in Europe, leaving their independence still unacknowledged by those Powers, who would in the event supposed, co-operate with Spain, in bringing them again under subjection. *We* conquered the acknowledgement of our independence, now nearly half a century ago, and have since gloriously maintained that independence, and the rights we derived from it, in a second war with the parent state : in which we contended with her, on the footing of her *equal*, in political rank, and proved ourselves her *superior*, in naval and military prowess. During all this period, we have maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with all the nations of the earth, not as an independent Power merely, but as one of the *first grade*, who had the means of making her friendship courted, and her resentment feared. In short, sir, we are as thoroughly incorporated into the political system of the world ; as any of the older nations of the other hemisphere, and if we had no other right to our independence, we might plead a title *by prescription*. The allied sovereigns of Europe, then, however wicked such an enterprise would be, might well assist Spain to reconquer Spanish America, upon principles, having no application to *us*, nor tending in any degree to put *our* independence in jeopardy. Although, therefore, I cannot believe that our *existence* or *safety*, is bound up with the Spanish American States, I am very far from saying, that an attack upon them by the combined Powers of Europe, would not be a subject of deep interest to this country. Sir, it unquestionably would be. The feelings and the interests of the nation might, in such an event, demand of us to “put on the armour and to assume the attitude of war.” But the question is one involving consequences of too much magnitude to be prejudged, or lightly decided. Let us not commit ourselves upon it, by anticipation, but continue, as we now are, *free* to take our course, whenever the question may arise, with a full regard to all those considerations which ought to influence our determination.

But, Sir, another argument urged in favour of this political connexion with Spanish America is, that we owe it to the *cause of liberty*. Sir, in my opinion, we can best advance the cause of liberty by the influence of our example, and by presenting to the world the spectacle of a prosperous and happy People, blest in the enjoyment of their free institutions. Let us, then, for the sake of mankind, as well as ourselves, attend to our own concerns—improve the gifts of Provi-

dence, with which we have been crowned—perfect and build up our political institutions, by every means of amelioration which time and experience may supply, that they may remain to our posterity, and stand in the eyes of the world, at once a *monument and a model of human freedom*. Let us, above all things, avoid the danger of being drawn into unnecessary foreign wars, which have, in all ages, been the grave of republican liberty.—We do, indeed, owe a solemn responsibility to all mankind, in this and future ages, for the fate of the experiment of free government, which has been committed to our hands. The success of this experiment does, in my opinion, mainly depend upon our keeping clear of entangling connexions with other People, who may be less blessed with an aptitude and capacity for freedom than ourselves, and whose interests or passions might involve us in enterprises foreign to our sober and peaceful pursuits. Sir, if *other* nations are destined to lose *their liberties*, let *us* acquit ourselves of the high trust which Providence has devolved upon us, and endeavour to preserve *our own*; that *one* beacon-light, *at least*, may be left to cheer the darkness of the political world, and to guide those nations who may have lost their liberties, through that sea of revolution, upon which they must embark to recover them.

But, Sir, our *sympathy* is challenged for our Spanish American brethren. One would suppose that their condition no longer presented a case for sympathy. They have passed through the perilous crisis of their fortunes, and are now reposing amid triumphs and successes. Their independence is achieved, and the war between them and the parent country has ceased in every thing but the name.—But, if the case were otherwise, have not the claims of sympathy been satisfied to the uttermost, by what we have already done? We were the first to acknowledge their independence, and establish diplomatic relations with them, by sending Ministers to their respective Governments; and even before we made a formal acknowledgement of their independence, (as early as the year 1818,) we applied to Great Britain to *unite with us* in some act of recognition, and by doing so, gave serious umbrage to the allied sovereigns of Europe, then convened in Congress at Aix la Chapelle. Two years ago, a memorable declaration was issued in the name of the U. States, which was supposed to have disconcerted hostile designs, at that time, meditated against them by these same sovereigns. We have more recently gone from Court to Court in Europe pleading their cause, and soliciting intercessions in their behalf, and have even urged our expostulations and remonstrances with the King of Spain himself, till we obviously provoked his resentment at our *officiousness*. Sir, is there to be no limit to our benevolence for these people? There is a point, beyond which even parental bounty and natural affection cease to impose an obligation. That point has been attained with the States of Spanish America. They have received their political patrimonies, and been liberally established in the world, and they should now take care of what they have, and provide for themselves.—Sir, however laudable a virtuous sympathy may be, in private individuals, it furnishes a fallacious and often pernicious rule of conduct for Governments. Governments are trustees for the happiness and advantage of those who are subject to their authority, and their first and highest duty is to their own

people. They are not at liberty to engage in enterprises of mere benevolence on behalf of others, when those enterprises may involve consequences detrimental to the interests of the societies, with whose welfare they are charged.

Sir, a *factitious enthusiasm* has been gotten up, in regard to Spanish America, which, in my opinion, has no foundation in any just conception of public duty or national policy. It has not been imbibed from the People. On the contrary, it has been forced in the hot-bed of our public councils, and all attempts to transplant it into the breasts of the People have been signally ineffectual. As this enthusiasm has exerted its influence chiefly here, I beg leave to read to the committee a passage from that venerable paper, so often appealed to upon the present occasion, which seems to have escaped the attention of the Executive, who has favoured us with an elaborate commentary upon other parts of it—a passage originally addressed to the People, but full of instructive admonition to their representatives, and at this time particularly applicable to them—“A passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favourite nation, *facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists*, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation of the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favourite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions, by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (*who devote themselves to the favourite nation*) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of *their own country*, without odium, sometimes with even popularity; gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.”

Sir, the current events of the times, furnish so striking a commentary upon this passage, as to supersede the necessity of any remarks from me, to illustrate or apply it. I commend it to the sober reflections of the committee.

Another argument urged in favour of the establishment of more intimate relations with the Spanish American States is, that, by doing so, we shall secure *their good will*, which is highly important to us, both in a commercial and a political view. What success is likely to attend this experiment, may be inferred from that which has followed our past efforts, of a similar nature. I have already briefly alluded to the various offices of kindness, and manifestations of friendship, which we have exhibited towards these people. With what return have they ever met? Let any gentleman read the late Message of the President of Mexico to his Congress, and then let his feelings of mortified and indignant pride give the answer. Sir, we have vainly imagined that, by the acts of disinterested friendship, and the solid and useful services we have rendered our Southern neighbours, we had won their gratitude and confidence; that they looked up to us as



their patron and guide, and regarded us with filial reverence—to use the language of a gentleman from Kentucky, (Mr. Metcalfe,) as the Mother of Republics. But, Sir, this fond delusion is dissipated. The Message of the Mexican President begins with celebrating, in the most fulsome strains, the power, the wisdom, the *magnanimity* of Great Britain in her transactions with the Spanish American States, and distinctly attributes the disconcertion of the schemes of their enemies to the interposition of the *British trident*—which trident was never interposed in any other way than by forming commercial relations with them, for *her own benefit*, and, even this was not done till three or four years after we had made a formal and explicit acknowledgment of their independence, in the face of the world. Sir, *we* have, heretofore, supposed, that *we* had some agency in disconcerting the schemes of their enemies, but the Mexican President gives the whole credit of the operation to Great Britain. In a subsequent part of the Message, the United States are introduced, with a cold formality, as “the *oldest* of the Independent States,” with some empty compliments upon our Revolutionary struggle, and our political institutions; and the fact is admitted, because it could not be disguised, that we were the first to acknowledge their independence. But we recognize no traces of that ardent devotion, that fervent gratitude, that affectionate confidence, which we have been taught to believe were cherished in all Spanish American hearts towards us, and of which there are such ample and gratuitous displays towards Great Britain.

Sir, the same unwelcome discovery breaks in upon us in the history of our attempt to negotiate a commercial treaty with Mexico. We see our Minister earnestly entreating for equal privileges, with the American States of Spanish origin, upon the ground that we are a member of the *great American family*, and that we have rendered important services to the cause of Spanish American independence. But, the claim is *pertinaciously rejected*, and the Mexican Government insists upon retaining the power of granting exclusive advantages to the other Spanish American States, expressly for the purpose of “*evinced her sympathies in their favour*,” and to our detriment, of course, in the event of a war (which she ungraciously anticipates) between them and the United States.—If we turn to the history of our transactions with the Republic of Colombia, we shall find in them, too, reason to apprehend that we have been deceived in relation to the feelings of that portion of the Spanish American People towards us. In fixing the basis of our commercial intercourse with that Republic, all that we were able to obtain from her was the concession of equal privileges with the *most favoured nation*. In a treaty, however, lately negotiated with Great Britain, she puts that nation on the footing of *her own citizens*. It is true, that, by the *consequential* operation of our treaty, we shall now be invested with the same privileges which have been accorded to Great Britain. But the difference in the *original character* of the stipulations evinces a partiality, to which our Government cannot be, and has not been, insensible. Sir, it is impossible to look into the records of our diplomatic communications with the States of Spanish America, and not perceive that their minds have *too readily* imbibed the poison of

suspicion, in relation to the singleness and disinterestedness of the views by which we have been actuated in our conduct towards them. The documents in our possession show, that a French emissary at Bogota, in 1823, laboured to make the impression that "the United States were influenced by *interested motives*, in recognizing the new Governments of Spanish America." This insinuation, however injurious and unfounded, had its effect, and its influence is discernible in all our subsequent intercourse.

The result of our past efforts, therefore, to conciliate the good will and affection of these new States, affords but little ground to hope for success in the experiment now proposed. Sir, for myself, I do not believe there ever can be any *cordial fraternity* between us and them. The difference of origin, of blood, of physical and moral constitution, of language, of manners and customs, of religion, as they preclude all congeniality of feeling, must oppose insuperable impediments to any intimate political union. From the external circumstances, too, in which we are placed, there must arise between us, and, indeed, there have already arisen—as in the case of Cuba—serious collisions of interest or of ambition. It may be said, with fully as much justice as the remark has been applied to England and France, that Mexico and the United States, from their relative situation, and the position they occupy on the Gulf of Mexico, are *natural enemies*.

The question then is, whether these elements of discrepancy can be mitigated or harmonized by any system of political connexion? I think not, Sir. All history proves that confederacies have been the fruitful matrix of internal dissensions and domestic feuds. How was it, Sir, with the Amphictyonic League of ancient Greece? The jealousies existing between the members of the League, particularly Athens and Sparta, its leading members, (which jealousies, too, grew out of the relations to one another created by the League itself,) involved them in perpetual controversies, and finally led to the Peloponnesian war, which terminated in its dissolution. Modern Europe affords us an equally instructive lesson. The history of the Germanic body, for centuries, is nothing but a history of the bloody and cruel wars among the Princes and States which composed it.—The scheme of a *great American Confederacy*, therefore, instead of affording a remedy for the evils which already exist, would but serve to aggravate them. It would itself be the parent of new dissensions, which, otherwise, would have no existence. In what has occurred, already, the *germs* of these dissensions are plainly distinguishable. We claim to be the *head of the American Powers*. In the beau-ideal of this new planetary system, sketched by Mr. Clay, in 1820, we were, indeed, to be, not the orb of first magnitude merely, but the *centre*, around which all the other orbs were to revolve. At one period, our claim to this pre-eminence seemed to be acknowledged. When the project of the *great American Congress* was first communicated to this Government, it was intimated that the United States were to be invited to *preside*. But we hear nothing of this now. We are only invited, as one among others. In the mean time, Colombia takes the *lead*, and our jealousy is excited in turn, as the letter from Mr. Adams to Mr. Forbes, very plainly indicates.



Here, then, we see the germ of those jealousies which would inevitably distract and embroil the *great American Confederacy*, as they have every other confederacy which has gone before it. The United States and Colombia would be the *Athens* and the *Sparta* of this *Modern Amphictyonic League*, and their rivalry would lead to a Peloponnesian war far more desolating and tremendous than that of which Grecian annals afford us the account.

Sir, I confess that I can see in this *American system* nothing but omens of evil. Believing that the Congress of Panama was *designed* to pave the way for its introduction, and that our Government—the *Executive* branch of it, I mean—in sending ministers to that Congress, intended, and stands committed, to co-operate, especially, in *two of its objects*, which I deem highly dangerous to the peace and happiness of the nation, I shall vote for any proposition, which will exclude *that design* and *those objects*, from the scope of the mission. I have endeavoured to shew that the *Executive branch* of the Government is *conclusively* committed, by their *official acts and declarations* to the Spanish American States, in relation to those two objects. They are bound by a Gordian knot, which *they cannot untie*, and *which we must cut*: and if, as my honourable colleague (Mr. Powell,) has said, the fate of the present administration is *already* sealed, if they should concur in any measures, at the Congress of Panama, committing the peace of the country, they will owe us their thanks for extricating them, by our interposition, from the unpleasant dilemma in which they are placed.







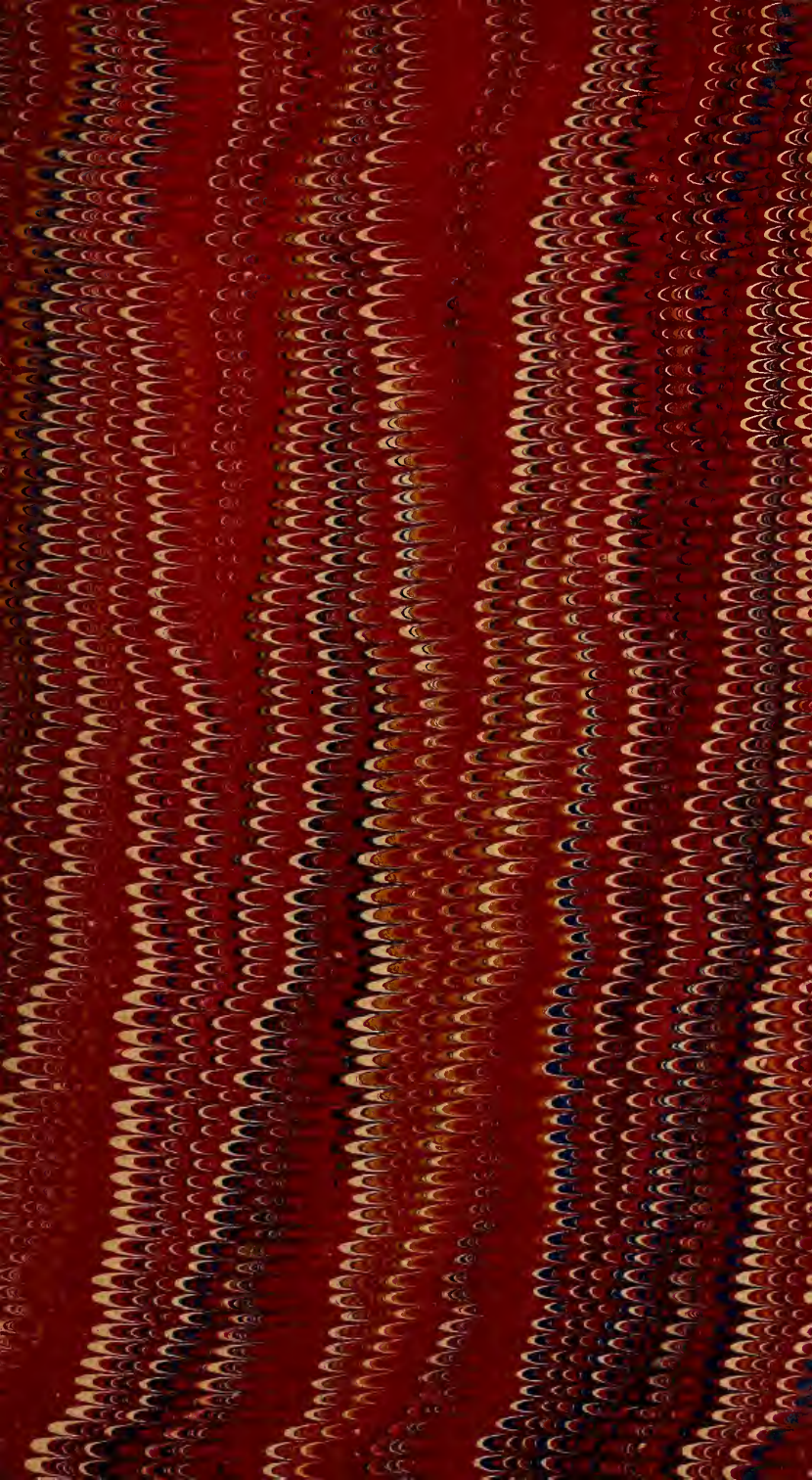












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